

AMERICAN ROBIN



TERRITORY: Males arrive first and pick an area that is an acre in size which may broadly overlap the areas of other males. After the females arrive and join with their mates, these areas become smaller. The final size of the territory is about 1/3 of an acre. The territory is a place where mating, nesting, and most of the feeding takes place. The area will be defended through all broods though sometimes territory is switched or moved for the second brood.

NESTING: Robins are one of our earliest birds to nest. The female does the majority of building, although the male may help bring materials to the site. Nesting materials may be gathered up to a quarter of a mile from the nest site. The nest takes 2 to 6 days to build, and may be started up to two weeks before the first eggs are laid.



Placement: On a horizontal limb, building structure or man-made shelf 5-30 feet high.

Size: Inside diameter 4 inches.

Materials: Grasses, twigs and sticks protruding from outer wall with a round, smooth cup of mud lined with a little fine grass to form inner part of nest.

LOCATING NESTS: Where to Look. In open suburban areas, in evergreens, in sturdy shrubs, or on man-made robin shelves.

WHEN TO LOOK: As soon as the females have begun to arrive on their breeding grounds.

BEHAVIORAL CLUES TO NEST LOCATION:

1. Look for a bird gathering or flying with muddy nest material.
2. Look for birds with muddy feathers across the breast.
3. Be aware of robins that continue to be alarmed at your approach.



EGGS: 3 to 4 blue-green eggs. Eggs are laid one each day until the clutch is complete. The female does all the incubation and generally remains on eggs for about 50 minutes out of each hour. If for any reason the eggs are destroyed, then a new clutch may be laid within 10 days.



NESTLING PHASE: Varies from as short as 9 days to as long as 16 days. While in nest they are fed by both parents.

FLEDGLING PHASE: Up to 4 weeks. The male does the majority of feeding of the fledglings, for the female has often left to start the nest building and egg laying for the second brood.

PLUMAGE: Robins go through 1 complete molt per year in July and August. Male & female are similar in appearance, except that the male generally has a darker head and his breast is a richer red.

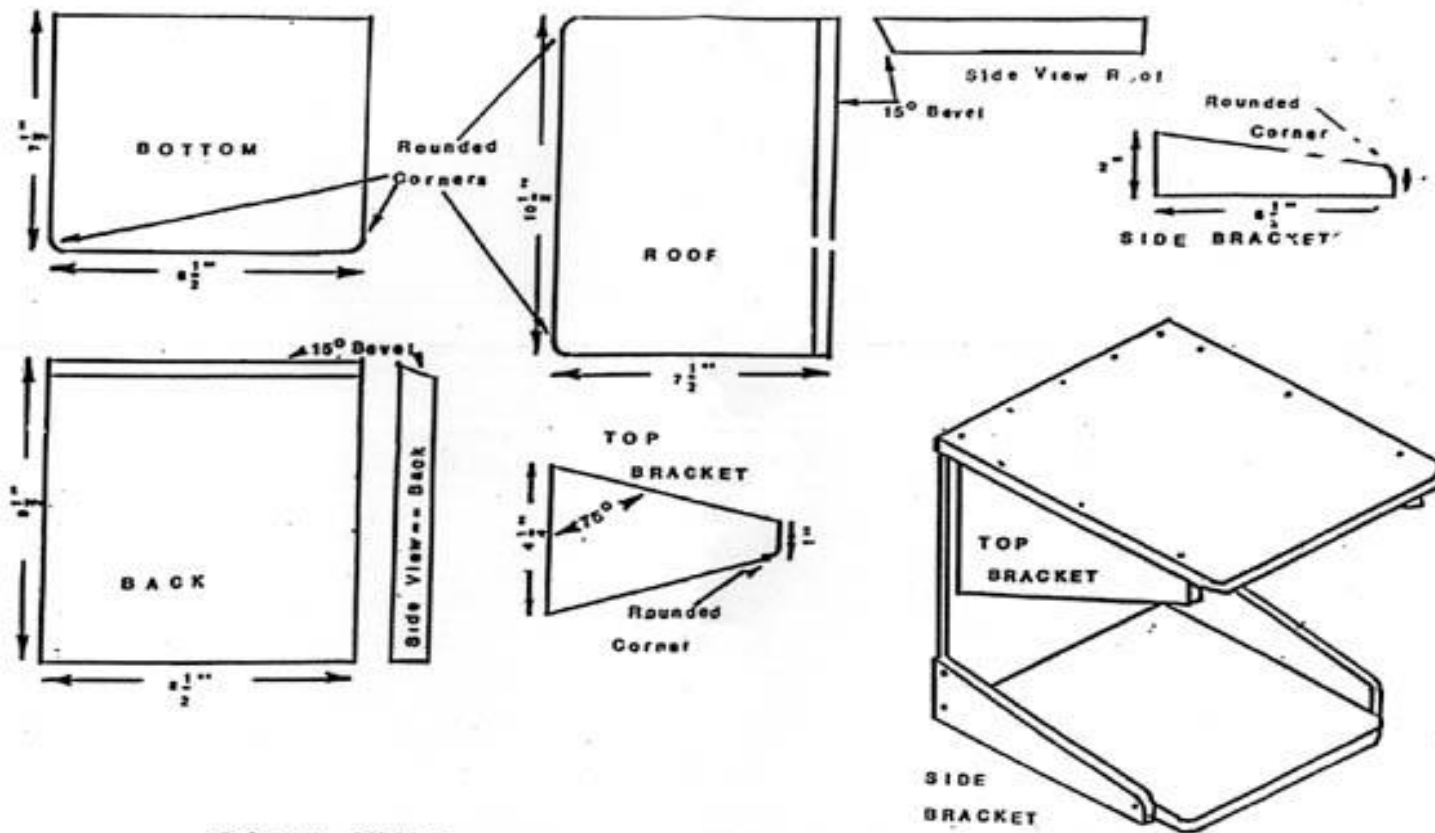
SEASONAL MOVEMENT: After breeding is finished, robins join other large flocks that roost together by night and feed together by day. They also change their eating habits from feeding on lawns to feeding on ripening fruits on shrubs and trees. Local flocks migrate first and are followed by Robins in more northern areas. The migration patterns of robins are not clear-cut. There are often large flocks of from 50 to 100 birds that remain in cold northern areas throughout winter. Since snow cover prohibits them from feeding on the ground, they subsist primarily on berries, larger fruit, and some seeds.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR: At various times of the year, robins gather for the night in large communal roosts. These roosts are quite obvious in fall after breeding has stopped and before migration occurs. The birds can be seen in the late afternoon, flying overhead a few at a time. Robins generally remain in flocks through the winter, and it is the break-up of these flocks in spring that signals the start of the breeding season. But even during the breeding period, male Robins roost together at night and then return to the area of their nests during the day.

SHELF INSTALLATION: Where natural sites as well-formed crotches are lacking, robins may use nesting shelves erected for them. These should be placed in partly shaded spots along the main branches of trees or else in the shelter of the overhanging eaves of a shed or porch roof.

MAINTENANCE: Clean shelf after fledglings leave nest.

OTHER BIRDS: Catbirds and Brown Thrashers use nesting shelves acceptable to robins.



ROBIN SHELF

Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary
 30 Peck Road
 Monson, MA 01057

Can be mounted under the eaves of house or
 garage or other protected place.
 NEVER place in direct sun or
 in the open.

Compliments of: NORCROSS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY 30 Peck Road Monson, Massachusetts 01057